

# Daddy's Little Girl

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Summary: "Daddy, help me, please!" He hadn't heard those words in years, but who were they coming from? Was that really his little girl?

## 1. A Postcard Home

**\*\*Author's Note:\*\*** During my viewing of the third season, I couldn't help but wonder how the now-alone Emma was coping during full moons. Therefore, I began thinking up what she would do when the water began 'attacking' her. Would she confide in someone? This is my answer based after a dream I had. I hope you like it!

\* \* \*

><p><em>Cleo and Rikki,<em>

\_Well, here we are in London England. I can't express to you how amazing it is to be traveling the world with my parents (yes, and Elliot too)! I know we've only just begun, but already I feel like I've seen so much! We just landed in England this morning and Cleo, the fashions here are absolutely amazing! The taxi we took from the airport drove down what Mom called 'Carnaby Street' and you can't believe the clothes in the windows! Doesn't look like I'll be buying anything though; designer fashion, like back home, is extremely expensive, and when you're on a budget, and unemployed, you kind of have to work with what you've got, especially when you're busy buying souvenirs for you two best friends. Hint, hint.\_

\_Anyways, so far, the only complaint I have is all this rain! I had to borrow Mom's umbrella just to get into the hotel. Sure, Elliot and Dad teased me pretty unmercifully about being afraid of a little rainwater, but what can I expect? Now I'm safely inside, but my parents unfortunately want to take a little walk. A walk? In the rain? Now we know I can't do that. I'll have to find some way to politely opt out. Which reminds meâ€¦|\_

\_The first full moon since I've left is due tonight. I'm so nervous. I guess I'll go to sleep early, seeing as I don't have you two to keep me company, safe, and sane. Let's just hope I don't fall victim to the moonlight. I shouldn't if I'm careful though, right? Wonder what it will be this time around anyways. Maybe this one won't even affect me? Let's hope. You two keep tight as well.\_

\_Well, enough about my experience, how are things doing back home? Have they done anything with the Juice Net building yet? I still can't believe it's gone. Guess it was doing pretty poorly after Ash left. Not that he was the only thing keeping that place alive or anything, but he did make it interesting. Why oh why am I even talking about him again anyways? He hasn't called me in months! Okay, so maybe it's only been a couple weeks, but he's my boyfriend, we should talk. Maybe Mom was right, long distance relationshipsâ€|

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\_Well, running out of room on this postcard, so I'd better close. Miss you guys, hope all is well.\_

\_Love,\_

\_Emma\_

## 2. A Father's Right

### \*\*Part I\*\*

He knew he had no right reading his daughter's letter, but when Neil Gilbert had caught the words 'full moon' written in her delicate scroll he couldn't help but take a second glance. After all, he wasn't about to forget all those full moons of past when Emma wasn't home, when Emma was outwardly rude to guests at a Birthday party, when Emma suddenly had a craving for everything seafood including his anniversary dinner, when Emma covered up all the windows with black tarpâ€| the list went on and on. He was her father; didn't he have reason to be concerned? Besides, he was only going to read one paragraph. It wouldn't be snooping, because she had written on a postcard, her words for the world to see. Not only that, but she had left it face down on her desk, the ink-inscribed message exposed to the air. He was only reading it because he was concerned and if she asked him about it, he'd tell the truth, but still he had no right.

After making sure no one was watching, Neil snatched the postcard off the desk and began to read:

"â€|\_The first full moon since I've left is due tonight. I'm so nervous. I guess I'll go to sleep early, seeing as I don't have you two to keep me company, safe, and sane. Let's just hope I don't fall victim to the moonlight. I shouldn't if I'm careful though, right? Wonder what it will be this time around anyways. Maybe this one won't even affect me? Let's hope. You two keep tight as wellâ€|"\_

Neil furrowed his brow. What was Emma talking about? Company, safe, and \_sane\_? Falling victim to moonlight? What did the words mean? Was 'moonlight' some sort of code phrase. Code name? He thought back to that boy his daughter had been seeing, Ash. Was this boy moonlight,

and if so, was he in London and planning to meet Emma somewhere that evening? But then why would she go to bed early? To sneak out against her parents' wishes? But that was so unlike Emma. She had always been so honest with them and with Elliot, it was family policy. Then again, he couldn't deny that in the past three years she had been acting suspiciously. Was Emma planning to sneak out and rendezvous with Ash?

Though possible, the option didn't make much sense, so Neil tried to think more literally. Moonlight, she had said. Did moonlight somehow cause the strange behaviors he noticed in his daughter each witnessed full moon? He guessed it would explain all the weird happenings, if only it wasn't so strange. Bizarre. Neil Gilbert never believed in magic, good or bad, and he wasn't about to now, but then what did his daughter mean when she mentioned moonlight and falling victim to it? He figured the only way he'd find out was to stick around the hotel room that evening. Lisa had wanted to go out for a movie after the kids were in bed, but he knew he could somehow persuade her to take the kids instead. After all, he knew for certain Emma would be declining the invitation. Whether she was sneaking out to meet somebody or quote 'falling victim' to some harmless rays of moonlight, she would be there when the moon rose and so would her father.

### 3. A Daughter's Plight

**\*\*Part II\*\***

I stared longingly out the hotel window at the drizzling rain. I had waited all my life to go to London and now I couldn't even enjoy it. I kept praying it would stop, but no amount of pleading seemed to do the job. It was showers today, showers tomorrow, showers for the rest of the week.

"Well! What do we want to do today?" I turned as my mother entered the hotel room, looking quite well-groomed after the incident that befell her that morning. I still felt kind of guilty about that, having been the reason why she fell victim to the falling glass of diet soda. Luckily, I had grabbed a tray in time to shield myself from the splatter, but poor Mom! "C'mon, Kids. We've let the rain chase us inside for two whole days. We only have a week in London. Why not brave the weather and try to enjoy ourselves?"

Enjoy ourselves? I couldn't go anywhere in this weather.

"Mom, it's pouring outside." Elliot looked up from his place on the rug, several comic books scattered around him. "What's there to do?"

"Well, it wouldn't take much to get inside a dry museum and enjoy that for a couple of hours."

It wouldn't take much, but it would take plenty to land me straight in an aquarium. "What types of museums?" I asked, trying to seem interested.

Mom turned to me and smiled. "All sorts. War and history museums, transportation museums, sports museums, there's even a toy museum and a cartoon museum."

Elliot's eyes lit up, "A cartoon museum?"

"Maybe I have some takers?" Mom raised an eyebrow, her gaze leaving Elliot and landing on me.

I shrugged. "What's Dad up to?"

"Your father's in one of his meetings. You know the drill."

Did I ever. The only reason we were even traveling the world was because of the business Dad worked for. They paid his way, Mom and Dad paid for the rest of us, and in the end, the deal wasn't so bad. Not that I was ungrateful. So they got Dad a couple hours each place we stopped, at least we had him for the rest of the time and traveling the world was absolutely amazing. The only downside was that I didn't have my two best friends along for the ride. Cleo and Rikki would have flipped for the opportunity I knew, but their parents would have never had gone for it. Especially since I had to take all my courses online to keep up in school. Elliot too.

"Soâ€¦? Which museum will it be?" Mom looked from me to my brother and back again.

"Cartoon museum!" Comic books forgotten, Elliot bounced to his feet. He was soon at my Mom's side with the craziest grin on his face.

"Sounds fun, how 'bout it, Emma?" Mom looked to me.

"Uhâ€¦ you know, no thanks. Why don't you two just go and enjoy yourselves?"

"Why not? You're not planning on staying inside all week are you?"

I hesitated.

"Emma, is there something you're not telling us? Are you sick?" Worry suddenly etching her brow, she started towards me and placed a hand on my forehead.

"No, Mom. I'm fine."

"It's that time of the month again, isn't it?"

"Momâ€¦" The last thing I needed was for her to bring up such topics in front of my little brother. "I'm fine, I justâ€¦" Can't get wet, "A cartoon museum just isn't really my thing."

"Well, then we can go to a different one. I'm sure Elliot would understand. Wouldn't you, Elliot?"

Elliot didn't look like he understood, "But Mom, why is it we always have to change our plans because of Emma? It's not fair! It's like that vacation to the beach and all those other things."

"Because that's what families do, Elliot. They make adjustments for each other. Your father can take you to the cartoon museum another day, alright? It'd allow Emma and I to have a little girls' day out to do some shoppingâ€¦"

"Wait." I hadn't meant to interrupt, but I just couldn't stand it. I was feeling guilty again. The kid had a point; the family had been making a lot of adjustments for me in the last three years. It wasn't fair that he'd have to suffer againâ€¦ of course, nor was it right to make me go walking out in the rain. "Elliot's right, Mom. It isn't fair. You shouldn't put down everything he wants just for me. You should take him to the cartoon museum today. Don't worry about me."

"Emmaâ€¦" She gave me a sharp look.

I knew she was convinced I was saying this to get out of leaving the hotel, so I added a peace offering. "I promise I won't stay here all day. I'll go out for a walk later and take in the sights."

"Rain or no rain?"

I tried hard to hide my unease. "Sure." I smiled.

"Well then," She looked down at my little brother, "Elliot, it looks like we've got a museum to go to!"

"Yes! Thanks Emma!" I watched in delight as my little brother ran towards the hotel room door, anxious to put on his shoes.

"Yes, thank you, Emma." Mom smiled at me, I could tell she was proud, but still a tad bit suspicious.

I smiled and turned back to the window. It looked like the rain had stopped. "I've got an idea, what if I walk out with you two?" I said as I followed Mom to the doorway.

"That's a marvelous idea, Emma."

"May I borrow your umbrella?"

"Of course. Go right ahead."

Elliot already had his shoes on and was waiting by the door for Mom and me. "This is gonna be awesome!" he said.

I sure hoped so. \_Rain, rain, stay awayâ€¦\_

Moments later, the three of us were on our way down the elevator, through the hotel lobby, and out onto the rain-soaked streets of London. I zipped up my coat, thankful that I had remembered to wear my tennis shoes.

"Got your cellphone?" Mom asked me as a hotel clerk hailed a taxi.

"Right here." I said, patting my pocket.

"Be back before dark. I left a note for your father at the front desk so he won't get worried."

I nodded, watching as a taxi pulled up to the curb. "Have fun!" I waved to my mother and brother as they entered the vehicle and drove away. I waited until they were well out of sight, and then looked

around me, wondering which way I should go first. I didn't want to get lost after all, just in case it started to pour again.

"Would you like me to hail you a taxi, miss?" The kind hotel worker turned to me. I figured he had noticed my perplexed expression.

"No thank you." I smiled at him, "Just walking." I picked a random direction and started off. I knew it wouldn't be long before I happened upon one of the 'sights' as they were called. Big Ben, Buckingham Palace—how far could those places be?

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A few hours later, I found myself walking down along the Thames River. It was a lovely afternoon, and thankfully, the clouds had thinned, causing a little more light to shine upon the gray English city. It was a beautiful place. I couldn't help but hope that tomorrow would bring clear weather so that I could actually enjoy it. The city had so much to offer, it was a shame I had to be chased indoors with the rain.

Pausing for a moment, I rested my elbows upon the concrete railing looking out over the water. I suddenly had the strangest notion to go swimming, but knew that would be dangerous. It was a full moon tonight after all, not to mention it was also in the middle of a public area. I guessed it was just another one of the quirks to being part fish; the water was constantly calling you.

The wind ruffled my hair.

I looked up at the sky, suddenly noticing that it was turning pink. Oh no! Pink! Sunset was now upon me and that meant the moon was already rising. I had to get inside and quick! But I had forgotten how far away from the hotel I had gone. I had been walking for hours, what if I couldn't find my way back?

I turned my back to the water, trying to calm myself. I'd just have to find somebody. Find somebody and ask them where my hotel was. It shouldn't be a problem. There was sure to be a café nearby. I pushed off the railing and headed towards the nearest street corner. Café and directions. Don't panic. How hard could this be?

I jumped, as something crashed behind me.

Turning quickly, my eyes widened as I was met with a sight I wouldn't easily forget. A large column of shimmering water had risen from the river and it seemed to be bending in my direction. It suddenly aimed and struck. I dodged, just missing another blow as it hit the concrete beside me. What was this thing, and what was it doing? Was this the result of the full moon?

It towered above me, reminding me of a cobra ready to attack. It glistened as it hovered, aiming before lashing out a second time, heading straight for me. I dodged again, and kept moving this time around, heading quickly away from the Thames, across the street and into the middle of the city. The thing was not to be hindered, however, and as soon as I stopped at an intersection, a sewer cap flew into the air and it was stretching above me once more.

"W-What do you want with me?" I stammered, watching it grow taller

than the nearby buildings.

The thing didn't answer, it just attacked again and again; seemingly not wanting me to pass. My options were running low. I turned back the way I had come. This time, I could feel the rumble underneath my feet as it roared in the sewers, but how had it gotten there? I paused by a fountain. A tentacle snaked out of this water as well. It was as if every place water sat, it was also there, ready and waiting to strike. But why? I had always thought water was my friend. Even before the series of freak events that turned me into a mermaid. Water was my friend. Then why was it acting so strangely?

I took off again. I didn't stop running until I reached the hotel, hurrying in through the front doors and up to the room my family was sharing. I didn't even wait for the elevator, taking the stairs instead. Coming to our door, I quickly used my key and slipped inside. Out of breath, I rested my hands on my knees, trying to catch it.

"Emma?" I looked up and spotted my Dad sitting on the couch. "Emma, is something wrong?"

"Daddy," I gasped, trying to appear normal. "You're back. H-How was the meeting?" I tried to force a smile, but it came out as more of a nervous smirk. I hoped he wouldn't notice.

"Emma, you're out of breath. What happened?"

"Iâ€¦" I struggled for a cover story. "I decided to get a little extra exercise and took the stairs up."

"Emmaâ€¦" He wasn't buying it.

I walked over to him, shoulders slumped, feeling guilty. How often had I lied to my parents since becoming a mermaid? Too often. Too much. I hated to do it again. But I had promised; I had to keep our secret. "I'm fine, Dad. Okay?" I sat down in a nearby armchair and crossed my legs. "Mom and Elliot get back yet?"

He nodded. "They just went out to see a movie." He cut in before I could answer, "We tried your cellphone, but you didn't answer."

"I must not have heard it. I wandered down by the Thames. There was a lot ofâ€¦" I thought back to the water tentacle. They had probably tried to call me while I was being chased. "â€¦noise in that area." I looked at my father. "I'm surprised you didn't go with them."

"Your mother and I decided it'd be best if one of us stayed behind to see you got in alright."

I felt guilty all over again. "I'm sorry."

He smiled at me. "It's alright, Emma. I actually didn't really want to go out tonight. After that meeting, I'm pretty tired. I was glad to have an excuse to give your mother."

I smiled back at him. I had to admit, I had some of the coolest parents ever.

"Maybe you'd like to order some room service? We could watch a movie

on the television."

The offer sounded so inviting that I almost accepted, but then I remembered the full moon and how I'd be safer if I went to bed early. "Thanks, but I'm pretty tired. I think I'll head in for the night."

Dad seemed surprised. "Already? It's only eight o' clock."

"Yeah— well, you know. Traveling and then that large walk I took today." I stood up and made my way over to him, bending down to kiss his cheek before heading towards my suitcase. "Goodnight." I went to the corner, popped open my bag, and began rummaging inside for my pajamas.

"If you change your mind, I'll be right here, watching the show."

I looked up and smiled at the back of my dad's head. "Okay. Thanks, Dad." Quickly escaping to the bathroom, I closed the door and changed into my pajamas, sneaking a glance in the mirror. That had been close. Not only keeping my father satisfied, but that near miss with the water monster. My mind was spinning over the second. What was that thing anyways? Were Rikki and Cleo running into the same bit of bad luck or was I the only one? Was the water turning on us now that we learned to stand up to the moonlight? There were too many questions, none that I had the answer to. I grabbed my toothbrush and began to brush.

After I had finished, I turned on the sink to rinse. The pipes began to groan and I took a step back. What was going on? I reached out to turn off the faucet, but it was too late. The tentacle was coming from the spout and it had a hold of my wrist. Wet. It was wet!

Ten seconds, and my fin appeared. I fell to the floor.

"Emma? Is everything alright in there?" Dad called from the other room.

"Fine!" I shouted back, my tone a bit strained. I tried to pull my arm free from the tiny tentacle, but it held fast. It sure was strong for its size. "Let go of me!" I murmured as I tugged. "Let go!"

Dad called again, "Are you sure?"

"Yeah, I'm fine."

Suddenly, to my amazement, the little tentacle shot back and disappeared. I paused a moment to catch my breath, and then inched against the linoleum to grab a bath towel. I needed to dry off, and fast. I began rubbing vigorously at my fin with the towel.

Uh oh— I heard a low grumble and turned towards the bathtub just in time to see the large tentacle twist into view. My eyes opened wide, but I swallowed my scream. How did it get in here? What did it want with me? What was it doing?

The tentacle lunged out at me, and I instantly grabbed the doorknob. Soon it had a hold of my tail. I struggled and squirmed trying to release myself from its grasp, but it didn't seem to do any good. It pulled me closer to the bathtub. Closer to the drain. I tried to stay



calm, but I was on the verge of panic. What was it doing? What did it want with me? Help!

"Rikki! Cleo!" I gasped, but even as I called out, I knew they were nowhere near to help me. I was on my own. Not even Lewis, or Ash, or even Zane were close enough to save me from this monster. I had to take care of it myself.

Cautiously removing one hand from the doorknob, I bent it towards the tentacle. Perhaps my ice powers could save me? I gave it all I got. The monster stiffened, but it didn't seem to freeze. If anything, it was holding on to me tighter. I tried still harder, but nothing seemed to change. My powers couldn't stop it.

My grasp was slipping from the doorknob, I didn't have much time. The water snake pulled me towards the bathtub. It was trying to pull me down the drain! What could I do? What could I say? I knew then that I needed somebody. I couldn't do this alone. I needed help or else I would fall victim to this thing! Rikki wasn't there, Cleo wasn't there, neither were any of the boys, that left one person that could possibly help me.

"Daddy!" All the air rushed from my lungs as I let out the desperate plea. As I cried out, I suddenly experienced more than just a shortness of breath. Mixed in with my fear and panic, a feeling of intense relief poured over me, and for a moment, I wasn't so afraid.

"Emma?" Having heard my scream, Daddy was at the bathroom door in an instant. He tried the doorknob but I had locked it before. He pounded. "Emma? Open the door!"

"I can't!" I gasped as the tentacle pulled me closer. I lost my grip on the doorknob and was now hanging onto the side of the tub. "Daddy!" I shrieked, tears coming to my eyes as I fell into raw terror, the seriousness of the situation returning to my mind, banishing the peace. "Daddy! Help me!" Where was it taking me? Why me? Why now?

"Stand back!" I saw the door bend as he began to hit against it. He was going to break the door down. I only hoped he could get to me in time. The tip of my tail was in the drain now, I struggled still harder but I couldn't get free.

"Daddy! \_Help\_"

#### 4. A Father's Fight

**\*\*Part III\*\***

With one final shove, the door crashed in. "Emma?" Neil staggered through the opening, almost out of breath. "Emma, what- " He stopped, his eyes widening as he met a harrowing sight.

"Daddy, help me, please!"

He hadn't heard those words in years, but who were they coming from? That thing on the floor. Was it really his little girl? Was that really his Emma? The face was hers, but the body... Orange fish

scales, a long slender tail. Emma was a mermaid?

"Daddy!"

He stood there in shock, watching as a coil of shimmering water, wrapped around the body of the creature with his daughter's face. It seemed to be pulling her towards the bathtub. Down the drain?

"Daddy! Help me!" The mermaid reached a hand out to him, desperately. "Please Daddy! Please!" She was crying. Emma was crying. His daughter was crying. His baby girl was crying! What was he waiting for? Pushing all doubt aside, Neil acted. He grabbed her swiftly by the shoulders and pulled. Pulled her away from the grasping water coil.

"Get away!" With a free arm, he smacked at the water monster. It seemed to shrivel with each strike. "Back!" He beat at it with all his might. Fish or not, nothing was going to take his daughter from him. Nothing!

"Daddy! Daddy!" Emma was gasping now, choking on her sobs.

"It's alright, sweetie. I've got you." He held her tightly with his left arm as he continued to fight with his right. "Back!" And back it went, more and more. It surprised him. It was almost as if it understood; as if it knew he would fight till the end -its end. He kept fighting for what seemed like hours, before it finally surrendered, slithered down the drain, and splashed out of sight.

Neil quickly plugged the drain.

"Emma!" Breathing heavily himself now, Neil tilted back the exhausted girl in his arms, "Emma, honey, are you alright?"

Emma was breathing rapidly, but she nodded her head. "Daddy! Daddy I'm sorry!"

"Shh!" He smoothed back her wet hair. "It's alright honey, it's gone." His beautiful daughter. Never in his life did he imagine himself fighting a villain like that to save her. What had it been anyways? Why did it want her? Why was she a mermaid?

"Daddy, I need to explain!"

He silenced her. "It's okay. Just relax. We can talk about this later. You need a moment to catch your breath." He hugged her again, then picked her up and brought her into the sitting room. Laying her gently on the couch, he brushed back her hair again. Never in his life was he so happy to see her. So happy that she was alive.

Emma rested a few moments with her eyes closed. When she had finally caught her breath and opened them again, she smiled at Neil and took him by the hand. She squeezed it. "Thank you."

He squeezed her hand and smiled back. "You're welcome, Emma."

After a few listless moments, Neil's eyes made their way back to the tail, attached to his daughter's body, lying on the couch where her

legs should have been. Where had it come from? Was it a result of the tentacle? Was it new? He doubted it. She seemed perfectly at home in its shimmery tangerine skin. He had always called Emma his little fish out of water, she had always loved to swim, but this, this was ridiculous! Was it real? How did it happen?

Magic. The word came to him quickly. He hadn't believed it before, but now he was undecided. He knew for a fact he hadn't brought a mermaid home from the hospital those eighteen short years ago, but then what explanation was there for this? If it had been magic, when and where did it happen? It hurt that he hadn't known. They had always been such a close-knit family.

"Why didn't you tell me?" He sighed and looked to her face.

She lowered her eyes. "Daddy, I wanted to, butâ€¦ I couldn't."

"Why not? We have a policy of honesty in this household-"

Emma pinched her eyes shut. "Please, Dad. Don't bring that up again. I've felt terrible about keeping this from youâ€¦ from everybody."

He thought back on all the times Emma had been with the family. When it looked like she had had something to tell them, but then quickly changed the subject. Had she really been harboring this secret for so long? He softened his tone. "When did this happen?"

She swallowed hard, "When I was fifteen." When he didn't reply right away, she continued. "Dad, you have to understand, I was afraid. I didn't know what to do when thisâ€¦ transformation took place. I just kept thinking that if anyone found out I'd be placed in a lab or an aquarium or something."

"We're your family, Emma. You know we wouldn't let anyone harass you."

She lowered her eyes. "I'm sorry, Dad."

There was more. She still wasn't telling him something. "I'm not the only one who knows, am I?"

She hesitated before answering. "No."

"Cleo and Rikki?" He made a guess.

Emma nodded slowly.

Being right kind of irked him. She could share this secret with her friends but not her own family? There had to be more to this puzzle. There had to be more. Neil sat on the floor and pondered.

"Dad?"

"Hm?"

"Are you alright?"

"Fine." Neil stood and looked down at his mer-daughter. Still lying

upon the couch where he had set her. It was so strange. He knew he would never grow used to it. He would never become accustomed to her new form.

"Don't look so forlorn, Dad. It's not permanent. As soon as I dry off, it all goes away. We don't even have to tell Mom."

He didn't want to worry Lisa, but Neil almost wondered if she should know about this. After all, now it was making sense. Emma's desire to eat seafood, her reluctance to get wet, her quitting the swim team. Lisa had a right to know, just as he had, all along. Emma had no right keeping this secret. Unless— unless she was trying to protect someone else. She still hadn't explained to him how it had happened. Were there others involved. That boy, Lewis, perhaps? He was interested in science, was this an experiment gone wrong? Though Neil doubted his daughter would be foolish enough to drink a glowing liquid, he knew there were other ways scientists could morph their guinea pigs, and not all of them included ingestion.

He cleared his throat. "Is there— anything else I should know about this— condition of yours?"

Emma thought for a moment. "I— can't get wet. If I do. I turn mermaid. Even just a drop."

He nodded slowly. Anything else?

"Also, you'll have to forgive me on full moons. They— the moonlight can do strange things to me."

He figured as much. "Like that— \_thing\_ in the bathroom?"

Emma's voice grew quiet, soft. "Honestly, Dad. I don't know what that was, or where it came from."

"It was trying to drag you down the drain."

Emma swallowed hard.

Neil felt afraid again. It was trying to drag his daughter down the drain. What if it came back? "Emma—" He took her hand again in his. "We won't tell your mother. We don't have to tell anyone else, but please, let me help you." He didn't want to lose her to some unknown. He didn't want to lose his only daughter.

She nodded slowly. "Sure Dad."

"I mean it, Emma. If ever you need help dealing with this— condition. I don't want you to hesitate to call me, understand?"

She nodded again.

"Meanwhile, I'll have to find some way to get you back to normal."

"No!" She cried out suddenly.

Neil's eyes went back to her.

"I mean," Emma averted her gaze. "Don't so that, Dad. We— I already

have somebody working on it."

He wanted to ask her whom, but figured he already knew the answer. Neil let out a long breath. "Fine. We'll play by your rules" for now."

She seemed to sigh in relief.

"But Emma?"

She looked up at him.

"Next time something like this comes up, or anything for that matter, I want you to tell me about it, alright?"

She hesitated.

"Alright?"

"Alright, Daddy." Emma nodded decisively, "I promise. No more secrets."

Neil smiled and drew her to him in a hug. Now that was music to his ears.

## 5. A Second Postcard Home

Cleo and Rikki,

Well, Daddy knows. Yeah, knows. Rikki? Don't hate me. He promised not to tell, not even Mom, but I had no choice. It was that full moon. Oh gosh, please tell me you two are alright! Don't tell me that thing got you too! It attacked me every place I went after the moon was up. It caught hold of me in the bathroom. It was going to pull me down the drain. I had to call for help. I just had to and Daddy was the only other one there to save me! I'm so sorry you guys, but it was time he knew. I had no choice. At least I'm safe, and actually, I feel some relief now that he knows. I mean, why should I be able to share a secret with my boyfriend but not my own father? Daddy was more than understanding anyways. Gosh, here I am calling him Daddy again after all these years. Gosh" what an afternoon. Hey, if it helps, he doesn't know about you and if you guys hate me too much, I can understand it if you want to drop me as a friend forever. Please understand though. I feel so much better now that Daddy knows. Sometimes I wonder if it were meant to turn out this way.\_

Forgive?\_

Love,\_

Emma\_

End  
file.